

Go easy on first-time GST offenders, gov't told
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Gerakan deputy president Dr Cheah Soon Hai has proposed a mild or light penalty for first time offenders who evade paying the Goods and Services Tax which will be introduced in April 1 next year.

Cheah said the punishment can come with the issuance of warning letter and fine should be handed out to first time offenders before other forms of severe penalty are meted out.

"The party holds the view that educating the public on the proposed implementation of GST is more important than introducing tougher penalties at the early stage of its introduction. Education is the best deterrent to GST offences instead of introducing tougher penalties.

"Despite this, I accept that more severe penalty should be meted out to deliberate repeat offenders," he added in a statement.

Cheah was commenting on the introduction of the GST bill in parliament by Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan yesterday.

It is reported that anyone who evades paying GST can face a fine of between 10 and 20 times the amount of tax, or should be liable to jail of a maximum five years' or both.

For repeated offenders, they can face a fine of up to 20 to 40 times or jailed a maximum of seven years' jail or both.

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